

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: September 24, 2007

From :  Joseph J. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 15: Consideration of resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to acquire APN 4434-009-015, a 38-acre parcel in the Garapito Canyon tributary of Topanga Canyon, unincorporated Los Angeles Caounty.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of Proposition 84 funds to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority in an amount not to exceed \$175,000 to acquire APN 4434-009-015, a 38-acre parcel in the Garapito Canyon tributary of Topanga Canyon.

Legislative Authority: Section 6500 *et seq.* of the Government Code and Section 33204(c), 33204.2(a), and 33204.27(a) of the Public Resources Code.

Background: The subject 38-acre property is located in the Garapito Canyon which is a component of the Topanga Canyon watershed. The property is adjacent to both the western boundary of Topanga State Park and southern boundary of a stand alone, 40-acre property owned by the National Park Service (NPS). The southeastern corner of Summit Valley-Edelman Park is one 40-acre ownership away to the west. The attached map shows the subject property relative to surrounding parklands. The property is on the NPS high priority fee acquisition list (Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area *Land Protection Plan*).

The property is bisected by a blueline stream that drains the adjacent NPS parcel and infamous Steers parcel that the MRCA has long sought to add to Marvin Braude Mulholland Gateway Park. This USGS blueline stream contains substantial riparian habitat including small pools. The property has tremendous scenic and ecological value. The owner states that the National Park Service has a trail easement through the property that follows an existing dirt road to the Steers and Mulholland Associates properties that tie into dirt Mulholland. Whether or not that easement exists, the proposed acquisition would provide a trail connection from Paradise Lane to the north into the NPS property. Development of the property would significantly degrade the Topanga Canyon watershed and be a great loss to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has entered into a deal to acquire the subject property. The MRCA has sent the attached letter requesting a grant of

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Proposition 84 funds for \$175,000 to acquire the subject parcel. The 3rd Supervisorial District has stepped up to commit to over 80 percent of the acquisition price. The County funding source is expected to be Proposition 62 funds. Without the County's funding this acquisition would not be feasible.